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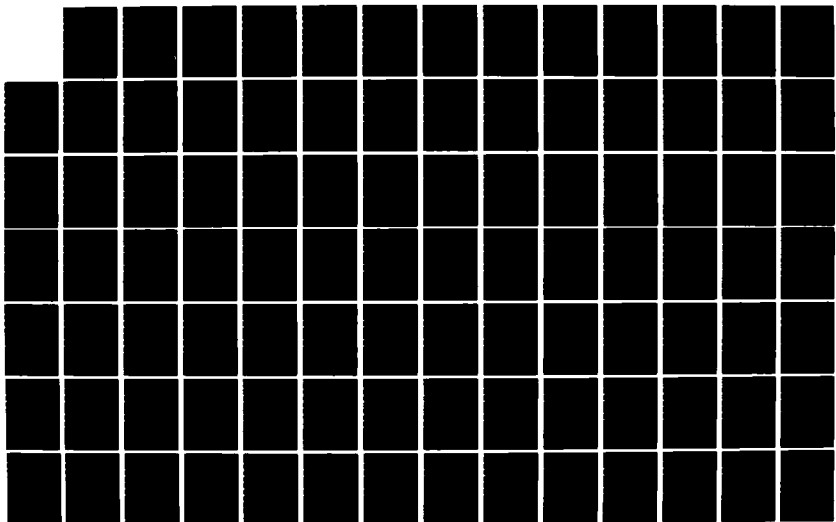
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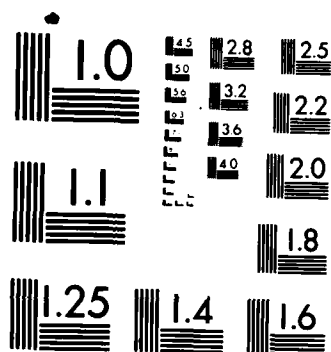
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THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE MILITARY AND THE MEDIA
THESIS

Timothy H. Ondracek
Captain, USAF

AFIT/GLM/LSH/85S-60

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THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE MILITARY AND THE MEDIA

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Systems and Logistics
of the Air Force Institute of Technology

Air University

In Partial Fullment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Logistics Management

Timothy H. Ondracek, B.B.A.

Captain, USAF

September 1985

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Acknowledgement

First, I want to praise the Lord for his grace and constant guidance. Although the purpose of this thesis was to gain and pass on knowledge, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Next, I wish to express my appreciation to my thesis advisor, Dr. John Muller, for the help and guidance he provided. Finally, to my wife, Nancy, I wish to express my deepest appreciation for the renewed purpose and direction she has added to my life.

Timothy H. Ondracek

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Abstract

The dynamic relationship shared by the military and the media has ranged from cooperation and trust to hatred and contempt. This investigation encompasses a history of this relationship during military conflicts, beginning with World War I and continuing to the present. The objective was to investigate these changing relationships in order to determine a policy capable of reacting to the needs of the military, the media, and the American public.

This research documents the permanent split created in the relationship of the military and the media during the Vietnam War. Because of this negative relationship, the American military personnel distrusted the media and therefore, were reluctant to keep the media informed about their operations. The media, which is overwhelmingly dependent on the military to provide it with information, also distrusted the military. The result was that the American public did not always get an accurate picture of the war.

Without censorship in Vietnam the military was not always open and candid with the media. However, the military cannot allow the media to work under false assumptions, or report a story if they are only partially

informed. Consequently, this research found that censorship during military conflicts will assist the flow of information between the military and the media. The effect will be a more fully informed American public during military operations.

THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE MILITARY AND THE MEDIA

I. Introduction

General Issue

On October 25, 1983, a surprise invasion was launched by US Marines and Army airborne troops against the South Caribbean island of Grenada. Almost as surprising as the invasion was an absence of the media. Journalists were not allowed access to the island until the third day and reporters already on assignment in Grenada were ordered out. Consequently, for two days the only reports of the invasion were official releases from military channels (1:A1; 2:A1,A23).

The restriction of news coverage resulted in strong protest from the country's major news organizations (1:A1; 2:A23; 3:65-66; 4:83; 5:14; 6:1). Cable News Network senior correspondent and noted journalism historian, Daniel Schorr, stated, "It's the first time in our military history that the press has been banned from covering a U.S. wartime military operation" (7:27). However, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Gen. John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, defended the decision to exclude reporters from the operation. Gen. Vessey stated the need

for surprise was paramount to the success of the operation and therefore outweighed considerations for including the media. Secretary Weinberger's comments iterated the concerns of the military commander's inability to guarantee the safety for the media as a major factor in the decision (2:A23; 8:A1). Initially, unofficial polls showed public reaction favored the government two-to-one in excluding the media's coverage of the operation (9:36). Even though, for the most part, reaction by the media was adamantly opposed to the ban there were supporters. The Washington Times in its editorial said:

The press is all wet when it claims that the Reagan Administration trampled the Constitution by restricting reporter access to Grenada. We believe that human life . . . would have been needlessly and recklessly jeopardized if reporters had been let in on specific plans.
(5:15)

Specific Problem

The media have always played an important role in keeping the public informed during military actions. The decision to exclude the media from the Grenada operation once again reopened the conflicts existing between the media and the military.

The media are charged with the responsibility of reporting and interpreting the news to aid in responsible decision making by each citizen (10:288). The military, on the other hand, must often suppress certain information for the sake of security. The major area of conflict stems from

decisions of what information should or should not be suppressed.

Before Vietnam War a special comraderie or alliance existed between the U.S. military and the war correspondents. These correspondents felt it was their patriotic duty to help combat the enemy, "accepting the nation's stated aims -- and the government's information -- without much question." This was not the case in the Vietnam era where distrust between journalist and military commanders caused adversarial and sometimes antagonistic relationships (11:45-46).

Many people feel the existence of an adversarial relationship between the military and the media can be very beneficial for both groups. The tension it creates will act as a "system of checks and balances" to offset any unethical behavior by either group (11:46; 12:32). However, given the changes in public opinion and attitudes of journalists and military commanders, how can the inevitable conflicts which arise be controlled to the benefit of all parties involved?

Definitions

In his book, Questioning Media Ethics, Bernard Rubin writes, "Public opinion in an age of mass communication is increasingly influenced or misshapen by the media." He goes on to define public opinion as

The label given to rallied attitudes directed for a brief time in the shape of a coherent idea or concept. Often it has no apparent concrete goal.

In between moments of group consensus . . . it is almost always residual, virtually formless, and composed of leftover attitudes, views and concerns formed from momentary enthusiasm or anger. (11:15)

Additionally, he further states that too often these ideas are not conclusions drawn from objective reasoning but are rather formed by self-interest or the emotional appeals of a talented rhetorician's slanted views (11:15-16).

Almost 200 years ago, in his letter, "Federalist 10," James Madison addressed the idea of certain minority interest groups dominating the majority public opinion. This letter, written in 1787, supported adoption of the newly drafted American Constitution. The letter specifically addressed the nature of man and his inevitable division into factions. Madison defined factions as

Citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interest of the community. (Quoted in 13:42)

Madison went on to say there are only two methods of dealing with the deleterious effects of factions. Either the causes of factions can be eliminated or the effects can be controlled. Since the elimination of the causes of factions can come about only at the cost of a loss of personal liberty, then in a democratic society, the only way to deal with factions is to control them (13:42).

Background on Government's Control of the Media

The control of the media by the government has mainly taken the form of censorship during times of military conflict. The following provides a history of the types of control exercised by the government and the changing relationships between the military and the media. This history begins with World War I and continues to the present.

Upon entry into World War I by the United States, President Wilson recognized the news media's importance in "stimulating the country's morale and of educating the people to the task ahead." Although he believed freedom of the press was important, some type of control would be necessary. To facilitate this, President Wilson brought about the Committee on Public Information (CPI). The CPI's primary task was to release information about the war, be the government's liaison to the newspapers, and be the coordinating agency for government's propaganda efforts (14: 356; 15:36).

A voluntary censorship code was adopted by the agencies receiving information from the CPI. Although the censorship was aimed at guarding information such as troop movements, ship sailings, and military operations, "the war newspaper editors generally went beyond minimum request in their desire to aid the war effort." The director of the CPI, George Creel, believed through factual reporting of the war

efforts the morale of the Americans and Allies alike would be encouraged while at the same time discouraging the enemy (14:357).

The CPI did not operate without criticism during the war. Many correspondents felt they had been "duped" and therefore had passed on unreliable information to the American public during the war (15:42). Charges were made of fabricating and exaggerating reported incidents. In retrospect, however, historian Walton E. Bean came to a different conclusion regarding the performance of the CPI.

One of the most remarkable things about the charges against the CPI is that, of the more than 6,000 news stories it issued, so few were called into question at all. It may be doubted that the CPI's record for honesty will ever be equalled in the official war news of a major power. (14:357-358)

The war brought about other forms of censorship as well. By executive order, jurisdiction over censorship of telephone and telegraph lines to and from the United States fell under the authority of the War Department and the Navy. Of primary concern were the outgoing communications. Examples of news stories selected for censorship involved misrepresentation of the United States to the rest of the world and reportings of labor disturbances deemed to be injurious to Allied morale (14:360).

Using the Espionage Act of 1917, the Postmaster General was able to suppress distribution of publications considered to be disloyal to the interest of American and Allied war

efforts. In all, 75 papers viewed as socialistic, pro-German, anti-Allied, or even non-conformist either lost their mailing privileges or were able to continue only after agreeing to cease printing information regarding the war (14:358-359; 15:37).

By 1915, 500 American correspondents for newspapers, magazines, press associations and syndicates were in Europe. When America entered the war this number increased, but only about 40 actually followed the operations of the American Expeditionary Force. Compared to the Allied war correspondents, the Americans were less restricted in their observations of the military actions of the American Expeditionary Force. For example, in the area under General Pershing's control the American correspondents were able to travel throughout the battlefield from the front lines to the rear areas without military escort. This was not the case for the British, French, or even the German forces. Everything written, however, was routed through the press section of the Military Intelligence Service for their approval. This censorship mainly involved guarding against early release of troop identification, general engagements, and casualty reports (14:361; 16:170).

The precedence of censorship set in World War I was reestablished at the beginning of World War II. Military censorship began on 7 December 1941, with the attack of Pearl Harbor. Two weeks later Congress passed the First War

Powers Act giving executive authority to censor all communications from the United States to foreign countries by mail, cable, telegraph, telephone, wireless, and radio-telegraph/telephone. To administer this program, Byron Price, an executive news editor of the Associated Press, was designated director of the Office of Censorship (14:477-479).

A publication was released by the Office of Censorship to guide the voluntary censorship of the press. It outlined to publishers the type of information which should not be printed concerning "troops, planes, ships, war production, armaments, military installations, and weather." These same guidelines were also passed along to radio stations. Again, as in World War I, the news media were usually over-restrictive in their censorship of any material they thought would be harmful to the war effort (14:477).

A separate agency, the Office of War Information (OWI), was established to disseminate the government's news of the war. Before censoring information to the public, the War Department, the Army, and the Navy were required to coordinate first with the OWI and its director. The director of the OWI, Elmer Davis, described the responsibility of the OWI as

Not only to tell the American people how the war is going, but where it is going and where it came from -- its nature and origins, how our government is conducting it, and what (besides national survival) our government hopes to get out of victory. (14:477-478)

At one time, about 500 full-time American correspondents were overseas gathering and reporting the news. The censorship of this news was not without controversy, however. There was confusion, and accusations were made by both the military and the media. The media were dissatisfied with the Navy's withholding, for a long period of time, the details of the Pearl Harbor attack and sinkings of ships throughout the Pacific. Additionally, General MacArthur's censorship in the Pacific along with conflicting British and American censorship of the India-Burma campaign brought about much criticism from the media. In all these areas, accusations were made charging the military with deliberately withholding information due to inefficient operations or poor leadership. In the European theater, however, General Eisenhower's policies regarding the media were considered satisfactory (14:479-480; 16:191).

A major incident by the media involved revealing classified information. The Chicago Tribune's coverage of the victory at the Battle of Midway in 1942 indirectly disclosed the fact that military intelligence had deciphered the Japanese's secret code. Prosecution under the Espionage Act was considered by the government but was never formally pursued. On the other hand, two of the biggest secrets of the war were handled very discreetly by the media. No early information was leaked concerning either the D-Day invasion or of the secret testing of the atomic bomb (14:479-485).

In a reversal of previous policies, media coverage of the Korean war began without field censorship. Nearly 300 correspondents covered the war at one time but tension still remained between them and military. Control over the media took the form of revoking accreditations of reporters "on charges of giving aid and comfort to the enemy." About six months after American soldiers began fighting, relations degenerated to the point where General MacArthur instituted full and formal censorship. This new censorship included all military information deemed injurious to the morale of the U.N. forces or embarrassing to the U.S. or its allies. War correspondents were even subject to trial by court martial for serious offenses. Strong complaints were lodged by the media charging the military with "political and psychological censorship" (14:494).

After General MacArthur was relieved of command, the stringent censorship policies were lessened although disagreements between the military and the media persisted throughout the war. The chief intelligence officer, Major General Willoughby, assaulted several notable reporters with claims of being "inaccurate, biased, and petulant." One further change in military policy came about six months before the end of hostilities. Censorship duties were transferred to public-relations officers from intelligence officers in all the uniformed services (14:496).

In 1960 the United States had 686 military advisors in Vietnam. By the end of 1961 there were 3200 and in 1963 the number had grown to 16,300. Journalists had been in Vietnam throughout the 1950s covering the French operations and by the 1960s had strong opinions against the United States becoming involved in a no win situation. In the end, the Vietnam war was to become "perhaps the most thoroughly covered war in history" (14:560-563; 17:28).

According to journalist John Steinbeck, the only censorship of the media during the Vietnam War was imposed by editors, publishers, or the conscience of the journalist himself (18:66). The U.S. State Department did, however, offer guidelines for the media concerning criticism of the South Vietnamese government, but this guidance was mostly ignored. Since most of the reports about the early fighting contained bad news, the integrity of the media in Vietnam, known as the Saigon press corps, drew critical reviews from the military as well as the media in the U.S.. The military branded the journalist as uncooperative while Time magazine went as far as to say the Saigon press corps was "helping to compound the very confusion that it should be untangling for its readers at home" (14:561-563; 18:20-21).

In 1965 the United States became more directly involved in the war. Military advisors began going into combat and bombings of North Vietnam were intensified. By the end of 1965, almost 200,000 U.S. military were in Vietnam. During

the following years, a "credibility gap" opened between the military and the media. Without censorship of the media, the military was accused of

deliberately falsified information, but also . . . [withholding] information detrimental to continued belief in the eventual success of U.S. policies and [establishing] elaborate statistical counts to justify the policies of the White House and the Pentagon. (14:563-564)

In 1966, Harrison Salisbury of the New York Times, "rocked the journalistic world." In an unprecedented action, he was granted a visa by the North Vietnamese government. Salisbury's first four dispatches from Hanoi reported the destruction and devastation of civilian homes and casualties caused by American bombing. However, not until his fifth dispatch did he mention that all the figures he quoted were provided by the North Vietnamese. Reporting propaganda from the enemy's capital created instant and strong criticism from the media and the military. Newsweek called Salisbury's reporting "lopsided" and the Pentagon charged that his figures were "grossly exaggerated." This doesn't even take into effect the moral issues created by charges of collaborating with the enemy (18:60-63).

The absolute low point of the military's opinion of the media came as a result of the North Vietnamese Tet offensive. The initial implications of the Vietcong's ability to "penetrate the supposedly 'secure' U.S. Embassy in Saigon" caused overreaction among the media (18:13-14). The overall results of the Tet offensive, "an unmitigated

disaster for North Vietnam," were not apparent for several months. The media had missed the mark and was charged with irresponsibility. They had portrayed "a disastrous enemy defeat as a dramatic enemy victory," and created "widespread public disillusionment at home" (19:58).

Since the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, the military has not been involved in any actions requiring military censorship of information until the Grenada invasion. By omitting the media from the invasion task force, old questions concerning the role of the media in military actions have once again resurfaced. This relationship is the basis for the research contained within this thesis.

Investigative Questions

The following questions are posed to guide this study:

1. How has the relationship between the military and the media changed since World War I?
2. Why has the relationship between the military and the media changed since World War I?
3. How have the changes been beneficial? How have they been counter-productive?
4. What was the public opinion with regards to banning the media from the Grenada Invasion? In what situations are the military justified in banning the media?
5. What controls can the government place upon the military and the media to insure ethical behavior is followed by each group?

Scope

This research will encompass a history of the relationship shared by the military and the media during military actions/ operations. The history will flow chronologically starting with World War I. The relationship between the military and the media will then be looked at in context to each of the major wars/ conflicts since that time, namely: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Contrast will be made between these conflicts and the present state of the military-media relationship.

In each of these separate conflicts, several topics of interest will be covered. The first thing to be covered will be a description of the relationship and the controls which were placed upon the media by the government. Also, the media's reaction to these controls will be looked at. Next, a description of the quality of the news reported by the media during these separate times will be presented. And finally, the last topic to be covered is the military's attitude toward the government's control and how these controls affected the relations it shared with the media.

Methodology

Introduction. The dynamic relationship between the military and the media has ranged from cooperation to distrust and conflict from the beginning of World War I to the present. The objective of this research is to investigate these changing relationships in order to

determine a policy sufficiently flexible to responsibly react to the needs of the military, the media and the American people. The methodology used in this research will include data collection and data analysis.

Data Collection. The primary source of data collection will be a literature review of the available books, periodicals and newspapers. The search for this literature will be limited to the libraries at the Air Force Institute of Technology, the University of Dayton, Wright State University, and the main branch of the Montgomery County Library. A secondary source of information will included research reports/data available through the Defense Technical Information Center.

Investigative Research. To guide the investigation of the research objective, five questions are posed.

The first three questions are:

1. How has the relationship between the military and the media changed since World War I?
2. Why has the relationship between the military and the media changed since World War I?
3. How have the changes been beneficial? How have they been counter-productive?

The largest portion of literature used to answer these two questions came from books about or authored by war correspondents and military leaders with first-hand experience in military conflicts. Also, a case analysis was performed on significant incidents that provoked criticism, from either the military or the media, for the manner in

which it was originally handled. These case studies were used to further clarify the underlying feelings of the military and the media during the given time period.

The fourth question is:

4. What was the public opinion with regards to banning the media from the Grenada Invasion? In what situations are the military justified in banning the media?

Information regarding this question will be gathered from current periodicals and polls conducted after the Grenada invasion.

The final question is:

5. What controls can the government place upon the military and the media to insure ethical behavior is followed by each group?

This final question will involve the data analysis.

Answers will be drawn from conclusions and recommendations discovered in the course of this research.

II. The Military-Media Relationship

Introduction

This chapter begins with a short summary of the evolutionary changes which occurred in the media industry and the military's public information system. This brief synopsis provides a description of the two agencies as they have progressed through the years. This will be followed by a description of how the relationship between the military and the media has changed. The description will follow a chronological path from World War I through Vietnam. Then, the major reasons explaining why the relationship has changed will be puported.

Changes in the Media Industry

The mass media has undergone enormous change since World War I. The most obvious changes were the introduction of radio and television. Some other physically observeable changes are the size of the different industries and the general public's demand for them. Some of these changes are worth mentioning because they may help to understand the more subtle changes that have occurred in the relationship between the military and the media.

Newspapers, the oldest mass medium, had a circulation of about 2250 dailies in 1914. Around the time of the first world war the newspaper represented 90% of the American people's sole reading material. By 1945 the number of

dailies in circulation had dropped to about 1750. From then circulation has remained rather constant until the present. As of 1979 there were 1763 daily newspapers (20:243,253-254; 21:121).

At the end of World War I, there were only 1000 radio sets in America. However, radio enjoyed tremendous growth in the next couple years and by 1922 there were 690 radio stations had been licensed. The number had grown to 850 by 1941. With the increasing popularity of television in the 1950s, the "once all-powerful" radio networks were relegated to minor roles in American life (20:327-333).

The magazine industry has enjoyed steady growth since 1921. Three hundred sixty-five magazines were published that year and in 1962 there were 706 in publication. Since 1962 the number of magazines has fluctuated from a low of 649 in 1966 back up to 704 in 1972. The biggest changes, however, in the magazine industry were the shift in popularity after World War II from general-interest magazines to the special-interest magazines. Again, this change was in response to television (20:269; 22:32).

Although television was invented before World War II, its beginnings as a mass medium originated in the 1950s. In 1952 it had about 15 million viewers and by 1960 the number of viewers had tripled. During this period the number of homes with television went from 33 percent to 90 percent of all homes. As of 1 January 1984, 85.4 million homes had at

least one TV set. This represents 98 percent of the homes in the United States. Also, according to A.C. Nielson, the average American household viewed television, or at least had television on, seven hours and two minutes a day (20:356; 23:115,428).

In 1977, a study showed that the percentage of time Americans spent with the media was: Television--48%, Radio--32%, Newspapers--13%, and Magazines--7% (22:53).

Changes in the Military Information System

For the first world war public relations in the Army was under the Military Intelligence Division as one of its five branches. The Public Relations Branch was further divided into three sections: Publicity, Contacts, and Censorship. All levels in the Army from General Headquarters down to Camp Headquarters had personnel manning these three sections (24:241).

The Publicity Section was responsible for disseminating information to the media. The Contacts Section was concerned with business and civic relations, while the Censorship Section was charged with developing and executing censorship policies. One major point is that the Public Relations Branch did not exist until mobilization orders were given. After the war, the need for the Public Relations Branch disappeared as the military resumed a "publicity-shy" mode (24:241; 25:55).

Between the two world wars all defense information came from the Office of Government Efficiency, a part of the Executive branch. Then, during World War II the Pentagon began to get more involved in the public relations business to foster public opinion and encourage support for its policies and strategies. In 1941 the military public relations offices were elevated by the Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, from within each services' Intelligence Branch to the level of the Secretaries of the Army and Navy. Then, in 1947 under the National Security Act, the Air Force was established with its own public relations office like the other services. Additionally, a Public Relations Section was authorized within the office of the Secretary of Defense (25:53-54; 26:246,250).

Throughout the 1950s the public relations office for each service grew increasingly important as competition for appropriations of the defense budget increased. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara decided to centralize these offices in the early 1960s. Today, the Pentagon houses the office of the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs. It has the sole responsibility for dissemination of all official information to the media (25:53-54).

Each of the services' public affairs activity is organized in this same basic manner. Its major function is to inform the general public about itself. If a media release concerns "overall plans, policies, programs, or

operations" of the Department of Defense or the service, however, it must be submitted through the assistant secretary. Also, the services are responsible for validating and coordinating on information received from office of the secretary of defense for public affairs before its public release (25:75-76; 27:105).

In the 1950s, Congress set a budgetary ceiling of \$2.75 million for public relations/information. No such limits have existed since 1960. In 1971 CBS aired the TV program "The Selling of the Pentagon" which claimed that the Pentagon was engaged in propaganda which that year cost the taxpayer \$30 million (25:49,54; 28:303).

How Did the Military-Media Relationship Change

World War I. During World War I the entire country was caught up in the wartime atmosphere. Local citizen groups resorted to vigilantly authority to suppress undesirable anti-war sentiment. Restrictions of civil liberties was common and accepted (14:360). Further, the tendency of the majority of the nation's newspapers was to stand behind the government in its call to support the war effort (29:40). Driven by patriotism, the press was criticized by some of the populace for blatantly publishing government propaganda (27:83).

The military and the media were both critical of the censors on the battlefield. The media claimed they censored too much and the military cried they didn't censor enough.

Regulations governing the war correspondents who covered the American Expeditionary Forces were strictly enforced initially. However, as the war continued, the "consistent good conduct" of the correspondents resulted in increased respect, courtesy and privileges from the military. In all only five correspondents lost their accreditation during the war, of the 60 at the front. The military began to recognize their worth and began facilitating their work. Accredited correspondents began receiving passes and identification cards like the military officers. With these credentials they could travel freely within the zone of the American Army without a press officer escort (28:72; 30:320-321).

Although many were critical of the propaganda the media published during the war, in retrospect censorship on the battlefield was well supported. Speaking before the War Policy Commission of 1930, the executive editor of the New York World stated that a free press along with other constitutional provisions must be foregone during war if its in the best interest of the nation. The same sentiments were echoed by a former war correspondent who said that a war without censorship and propaganda was inconceivable (24:237,322).

World War II. The vast majority of news during World War II was of the "human interest" variety. Correspondents dedicated much of the material to the GI and their common

everyday activities. The top military leaders were "humanized" for the public by correspondents (16:193-194). In fact, journalists were encouraged by commanders to cover their units. Meanwhile in the U.S., the tendency of the majority of the nation's newspapers was to show more loyalty toward the government in an effort to help the war effort. Many times due to public pressure and the overreaction of many editors, information was withheld from the public which had no security value whatsoever (25:61-62; 29:40,42).

General Omar Bradley and General Dwight Eisenhower often expressed their trust and confidence in the war correspondents. General Eisenhower described them as an "intelligent, patriotic and energetic group of individuals." Although many correspondents were privy to much of the available secret information, Gen. Bradley stated that no "newsman accredited to my command willfully violated a confidence of mine." During World War II it was an American practice to assist correspondents as much as possible, letting them travel freely wherever and whenever they wanted. Although it caused Gen. Eisenhower "additional administrative burdens, it paid off in big dividends because of the conviction in the minds of all that there was no attempt to conceal error or stupidity." It also raised the morale of the troops to see their unit mentioned in print (31:6; 32:300-301).

The use of background briefings became a new way for the military to pass sensitive/delicate information to reporters. The beginnings of these background briefings can be traced to two of the top U.S. military officers, General George C. Marshall and Admiral Ernest J. King. General Marshall used these background briefings to dispel rumor. . By giving the press all the facts, his aim was to insure the true story was published. At one point he briefed the press on the highly classified Allied battle plans. Although he trusted them to keep the information confidential, which they did, his purpose was to prevent them from printing speculations and quoting false sources. In another instance, Admiral King let it be known that there were plans to relieve Gen. Marshall as chief of staff. By disclosing the information, which he considered to be a bad plan, the transfer was prevented (33:130-132).

At the end of World War II the overwhelming sentiment was that the war had been accurately and fully covered. For instance, with a couple of exceptions, no major campaign or battle was misreported with regards to its success or failure. Although naval news was criticized for its delays, no news blackouts were ever implemented. Also, false or exaggerated atrocity/hero stories were minimal in comparison to World War I (16:176-177,191).

The Korean War. The relationship between the military and media started off badly in Korea. Reporting was

restricted only through voluntary censorship. At the beginning of the war, American troops were initially in retreat from the North Korean invasion of the south. The media, reporting the retreat, told of panicky, ill-equipped troops who often broke and ran. This infuriated the Army and brought charges of 'giving aid and comfort to the enemy.' The counter charge against General Douglas MacArthur's staff was they did not know the difference between the censorship of "military secrets and military prestige" (21:337; 34:58).

The strained relationship between the military and the media continued as the war went badly for the United Nations' forces. No correspondent in Korea dared to question Gen. MacArthur's strategies when the Chinese entered into the fight late in 1950, and forced the second retreat of the U.N. troops. This was mainly because he had already expelled 17 correspondents from the war theater. During this period he claimed the press had exaggerated losses to American forces and had "given a completely distorted and misrepresentative picture" of the fighting. At the same time the media began to question official releases of enemy strenghts and losses when estimates began to be calculated "down to single figures" (21:342,349; 34:60).

Due to the growing confusion and disagreement over what was being reported, the correspondents themselves requested

the military invoke formal censorship. The media was tired of the responsibility and the problems associated with deciding what was vital to national security. The introduction of full censorship in December 1950 was far more restrictive than envisioned. Violations could be punished with trial by court-martial in extreme cases. In addition to the material normally subject to military censorship, correspondents were forbidden to criticize or make 'derogatory comments' concerning allied war conduct, its troops or its commanders. The media had never questioned the right of security censorship but the censorship of policy information was to draw continual controversy and arguments (21:337,345; 35:545; 36:47).

The pressure for American correspondents to "get on side" with the military was not generated exclusively from the military high command. The pressure also began to emanate from America. Many editors began killing stories due to the negative impact they perceived it would have on the war effort. At that time, there was no major daily newspaper in opposition of the war. American correspondents began resigning themselves to accepting official military releases they knew to be false. Many merely reported the war in terms of gains and losses only (21:346-356).

Not until December 1952 did censorship, in the theory, begin to change. It was through the efforts of 13 experienced newsmen that a new regulation governing military

was drafted. Two major themes were incorporated to help the relationship of the military and the media. The first emphasized the necessity of speed in handling news information. The second theme established the principle that news will not be censored based upon a suspected negative public reaction (37:71).

The Vietnam Era. The American military presence in Vietnam began in 1954 with 200 military advisors. Very little emphasis was given to coverage at first. Between the years of 1960 and 1963 there were only seven full-time reporters in Saigon even though the number of U.S. military advisors in country grew to over 16,000. These reporters drew considerable criticism throughout this period. Both the American military in Vietnam and the South Vietnamese government, under Ngo Dinh Diem, were highly critical of the reporting of current events. Their own editors and fellow journalist in the United States also began questioning their motives and loyalties. Marguerite Higgins, a former war correspondent in Korea visited Vietnam in 1963. While there she wrote, "Reporters here would like to see us lose the war to prove they are right." Editors, not knowing why there was a difference between reports received from Saigon and official reports released in Washington DC normally discounted their own correspondents (21:374-380).

The Saigon correspondents and the military both felt they were being undermined by each other. The military was

forced to conceal the true extent of their involvement in combat in order to support the official White House position that Americans were purely advisors. At the same time they were compelled to defend the Diem government's position in Vietnam. Consequently, they did not understand why the media could not appreciate their situation and would not 'get on the team' and support their efforts. The media, on the other hand, seeing the discrepancies between official and actual policy felt obliged to report it. They were not critical of America's intervention but rather the effectiveness of the policy and its support of the corrupt Diem government. Therefore, continual conflict arose between the military and media. Their relationship can be summarized by one of the journalist in Vietnam during that period. He told the military, "We assumed your patriotism and your intelligence. I don't think you gave us comparable benefit of the doubt" (21:376-380; 25:163).

In the spring of 1964, a Gallup poll found that 63% of the general public paid little or no attention to the events in Vietnam (17:35). This would soon change. In August of that year, Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked two U.S. destroyers off the coast of North Vietnam in international waters. The U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate passed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution by an overwhelming majority of 416 to 0 and 88 to 2 respectively (38:53). The resolution stated:

The Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression. (39:167)

Congress' full support of the president led to the escalation of American involvement. As the war began to escalate so did the coverage. In mid 1965 American troops numbered 75,000 and by the end of the year there were 131 accredited members of the media in Vietnam (40:11). Also, public support in favor of the war was to be at its all-time high by the years end (41:27). This public support was reflected in the media's support for the military. The antagonistic relationship between the military and the media decreased in intensity in 1965. For the next couple of years the reporting of the war by the media was categorized as either positive or at least neutral in tone (42:46; 43:114-115).

A comment by a U.S. Army officer returning from an operation late in 1965 is indicative of the good rapport between many officers and correspondents. He praised the dedication of the correspondent and stated he was 'proud to have him' on the operation (44:12). Many correspondents began attaching themselves with different military units in the field. Their reporting resembled the journalism of World War II. They sympathized with the troops and wrote about the noble aspects of the war like courage and comraderie (21:385).

As time went on the novelty of combat tales began to wear off and the media coverage became less and less favorable. Fewer reporters stayed in the field for more than a few hours, and then just to get enough details of the action to make a story (40:26,89). Military commanders began to resent this. They were concerned with the welfare of their men and the operation. Casualties could sometimes be attributable to the problems associated with a journalist being flown into a combat zone for an interview or a shot of the action. In one such situation, Harry Reasoner of CBS news, described the anger of a camp commander at his arrival. As soon as their helicopter landed, the enemy resumed shelling of the camp which had been quiet for hours (45:148-153).

A major portion of the news broadcasted and published in the United States originated from the daily press briefings in Saigon. The 'Five O'Clock Follies,' as they were known, were presented by the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) Office of Information. These briefings were attend by all the major news organizations. General William C. Westmoreland, commander of MACV, was under tremendous pressure from the White House Administration to "present the war in its most favorable light." Therefore, the daily briefings did not always tell the whole story (40:18-19; 42:40).

The military's senior commanders were continually optimistic about the progress of all facets of the war. However, correspondents found no substantial evidence of a weakening of the enemies strength or resolve to fight. This "optimism without results produced, in time, a credibility gap." Skepticism, fostered by the credibility gap, turned to distrust of every official release by the military (46:209; 47:335; 48:98-99). Every denial by the Pentagon was automatically assumed to be a cover-up and therefore the media took every denial to be an affirmation of guilt (44:17).

An irreconcilable split in the relationship between the military and media occurred during the Tet Offensive of 1968. On 30 January 1968, a major offensive led by Vietcong and the North Vietnamese Regular Army was launched against South Vietnam. The news of Vietcong 'sappers' successful penetration of the U.S. Embassy and Presidential Palace in Saigon shocked both the media and the American public. How was this possible, they asked? The years of optimism and the perpetual assurance of progress seemed to be an illusion now that the enemy were assaulting the capital and the embassy building. The media, which had dutifully reported the military's optimism in the past, felt betrayed (21:397; 40; 43:116-117; 46:210; 47:80-81; 48:146).

Although the immediate effects of the attacks were not initially available, the media led their audiences to assume

a defeat was in the making. They were quick to draw conclusions and awarded the enemy "a major 'psychological' triumph." The significance of the embassy as a target and the destruction during the fighting were overplayed. Negative reporting was excessive (see appendix A). The end result was the American public was disillusioned and left with considerable doubt as to the war's eventual outcome. In retrospect, however, most historians today agree the media overreacted and the enemy had actually suffered a severe setback during the Tet Offensive (19:58; 21:397; 40).

The affects of the reporting of Tet in America were irreversible. Much of the media did not make corrections of earlier misstatements or take a retrospective view of the fighting after it was over (40:715). This affect is noted by Harry McPherson, special counsel and presidential speech writer who remarked:

It is particularly interesting that people like me -- people who had some responsibility for expressing the presidential point of view -- could be so affected by the media. I put aside my own interior access to confidential information and was more persuaded by what I saw on the tube and in the newspaper. (47:82)

Public confidence in the military policy in Vietnam went from 74% approval in February to 54% in March 1968 (40:687). The distrust of the media by the military turned to resentment and in some cases hatred. These two institutions were no longer adversaries, they were enemies (49:86). These feelings remained mutual for many years,

even after the war was over. Today many public affairs officers and commanders still hate the press (42:85; 50:34,37).

A 1982 study project by the U.S. Army War College is indicative of current feelings. A survey was performed of 168 active duty Army Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels and 120 Army General Officers both active duty and retired. The majority of respondents agreed the military should avoid attempts to mislead the media. They also agreed that the concept of a free press is paramount to our society. However, the overall opinion of the respondents was of distrust of the media (51:6-19). Listed below are the sentiments of two active duty general officers and a colonel which were representative of all responses.

I have over five years infantry and special operations experience during two wars. I have not had a favorable, honest media coverage of a single action. Therefore, I treat the current and recent past members of the media as potential adversaries. I have been misquoted, taken out of context and credited for utterings I have not made, by the press.

. . . I feel the needs of the Army are most often best served if I have as little as possible to do with the press. If given the choice, this would be exactly the way I would conduct myself with the press during wartime. I will be too busy keeping my troops alive to deal with people who I don't really feel give a damn at all in the final analysis what happens to my soldiers as long as they get a good story out of it.

I strongly believe the the media cannot be trusted to accurately report what is happening. They tend to reflect their own biases (usually liberal/left wing and anti-military). Many cannot accurately report military matters because of their ignorance and arrogance. (51:13-14)

Summary. The changes in the relationship between the military and the media have been dynamic in nature through the years. At the beginning of World War I, the media was critical of the severe censorship on the battlefield. Their presence with the American Expeditionary Force was rigidly controlled by government regulation. As the correspondents became known to commanders, mutual respect and consideration were afforded to each other (28:72; 30:320-321). During World War II, the relationship was characterized by mutual cooperation. There were no attempts to "blackout" news coverage of any event. Gen. Eisenhower believed in keeping the media fully informed and recalls the "friendly relationship" enjoyed by the military and the media (32:300-301).

This relationship was to change in the Korean War. Without censorship, the military was often infuriated with the media. Due to the pressure from the military, the media requested formal censorship be introduced to clear up the ambiguities surrounding self-censorship. When finally introduced, though, censorship was far stricter than had been envisioned. Until the end of the war the relationship between the military and the media was far more adversarial than in the previous war. Throughout the war the military expressed anger at those correspondents that did not favorably portray the military. Conversely, the media charged the military with political censorship as well as security censorship (21:336-352; 34:58-60).

The relationship between the military and the media during the early U.S. involvement in Vietnam was marked by mutual criticism. This criticism was often antagonistic because the military tried to downplay or mislead the media in regards to their actual combat involvement. The military, trying to support American foreign policy guidance from the White House, felt the media was undermining their efforts (21:376-380; 25:163). When Americans finally became directly involved in the war, the relationship improved for a while. The media was mainly occupied with conveying the combat experience to the American public (21:385; 43:114-115). As the war continued, the media began questioning the official optimism concerning reports of progress. Again the media criticized the military for withholding information while the military charged the media with sensationalism and biased reporting. The reporting during the Tet offensive marked a pivotal point in the relationship between the military and the media. The antagonism changed into contempt and bitterness specifically because of the unbalanced reporting during this time. The military victory was portrayed as a demoralizing defeat. The media felt justified on the grounds of years of official deceit about the true progress of the war. This bitter relationship was to continue and is still alive to a degree even today (21; 40; 43; 46; 47; 48).

Why Did the Military-Media Relationship Change

The Two World Wars and Korea. One of the main reasons for the cooperative relationship between the military and the media during World War I was patriotism. Achieving victory became the overriding cause to slant the news in the direction most helpful to the war effort. The media as a whole felt this was a major portion of their job. After the war, chief censor Fredrick Palmer recalled his role as "public liar to keep up the spirit of the armies and people of our side." For the most part, the media mainly accentuated the positive while deemphasizing the negative aspects of the war (16:155,175; 27:83; 29:40; 52:422).

The threat of legal prosecution was another powerful incentive for the media to report military activities in a more favorable light. The Espionage Act was established in 1917. In 1918 the Trading with the Enemy Act and Sedition Act formalized censorship. After that it was against the law to report information that interfered with U.S. military success or caused disloyalty or mutiny. Also, it was illegal to print disloyal or profane language used against the U.S. or its military services. Without precedence cases to gauge the actual punishment the government would use, the media generally went beyond the letter of the law (14:360; 28:72).

The style of reporting during this period was also responsible for the military-media relationship. Most

reporters wrote straight forward, factual accounts of daily events. This style of journalism, called "objective reporting," is described as non-partisan, non political conveyance of facts and events (27:66; 53:2; 54:69-70).

Two trends created objective reporting by the media. The first trend was the drive for larger circulations. In order to increase readership, the news had to appeal to a larger group of people. Objective reporting avoided offending readers and thereby advertisers were not alienated. Secondly, "newsgathering associations" or wire services were being formed. They also had to appeal to a broad spectrum of clients and therefore wire service writers avoided editorializing (27:66-67).

There was criticism after World War I over the severity and extent of censorship (16:156). However, by 1939 all was forgotten. In fact, the military by then was one of the least important national institutions. The United States had no troops on foreign soil and no military alliances with any nation (55:3,11).

Again in World War II the tendency of a majority of the nation's newspapers was to rally behind the government to support the war effort (29:40). Byron Price, head of the Office of Censorship during the war, rebuked radio and newspapers for going overboard on censorship. Many were voluntarily suppressing information that contained no security value (25:62).

In the combat theater, the relationship between the military and the media was characterized by mutual respect and understanding for two reasons. First, most of the top military leaders believed in providing as much information as possible to the media. No attempts were made to cover up any major mistakes or wrong-doings by the military. Also, background briefs and interviews were used to pass on off-the-record information to avoid erroneous speculation by the media. Secondly, censorship was far less strict than in the previous war. Correspondents were also given freer reigns to travel throughout the combat theater (32:301; 33:131-132).

During the Korean War, the military attitude toward the media was one of disdain. It was expressed by Gen. MacArthur's press chief, Colonel Pat Echols, as "the fewer correspondents around, the better." The reasons for this attitude were twofold. Initially, without formal censorship, the media reported the lack of military progress and told about the shortage of equipment in Korea. This stirred up bitter criticism from the military. They perceived this type of reporting as being disloyal and helpful to the enemy. Additionally, the military complained about the poor quality and inexperience of the majority of correspondents. Many correspondents carried weapons with them into the combat areas. Instead of serious reporting, they seemed far more preoccupied with a desire to kill a North Korean (21:338,348).

At the outset of the war, the media received no special considerations from the military like they had in World War II. They worked and lived in a one room facility which had only one phone. The military's explanation was that all other available resources were to be used by the troops. They were constantly criticized for writing about military failures. They, in turn, were highly critical of the military's censorship of non-security type information. In time, however, most of the correspondents acquiesced under the pressure from the military and from their editors at home to support the war (21:337-338,356).

The New Trend Toward Information Control. Information handling by the military after World War II became an ever-increasing trend to restrict the information flow to the general public. This restrictive trend resulted in the classification of enormous amounts of information in the name of national security. Informally, the examples of high ranking officials and commanders, from the President on down, fostered the practice of managing or manipulating information (25:64-66).

Formal Control. This new trend began in September 1951 when President Harry Truman issued Executive Order No. 10290. It contained the standards for classifying security information in all Executive agencies and was the first time information had been formally controlled in other than a wartime situation. Four classifications, "top secret",

"secret", "confidential", and "restricted", were authorized for information within federal agencies. The media complained that the order was too broad and encompassed too many separate agencies. They also claimed the classifications would be used to hide personal and political mistakes (25:57; 33:119-120).

In 1953 President Dwight Eisenhower revised the order by limiting the number of effected agencies that could classify information. Additionally, the classification "restricted" was eliminated. President Eisenhower's revised order then remained in effect until 1972 when President Richard Nixon issued Executive Order No. 11652. This order sought to shorten the process of declassification and further restricted the number of agencies and individuals authorized to classify information (25:57; 33:120).

This, however, according to the media is just a starting point. Many feel there is still too much information being classified unnecessarily. According to a Pentagon official, speaking before a committee of the House of Representatives, there are over 1 million cubic feet of classified files in the Pentagon. In his opinion, former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg stated that 75% of the documents he has come into contact with should never have been classified in the first place. Also, syndicated columnist Jack Anderson believes 98% of the information in the government's classified documents are classified only to

conceal information from the public. Most of which he feels was to hide ineptness and mistakes (25:58; 56:64).

Informal Control. The military's attitude toward the press evolved from the example of many of the nation's leaders. By the end of his term in office, President Johnson had no credibility with the media because of his reputation for lying (27:86; 28:117; 57:33). Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara often disclosed information having questionable validity. Throughout the early escalation of the war in Vietnam, he misrepresented the scale of operations and downplayed the number of troops involved (27:80; 58:36). Arthur Sylvester, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs from 1962 until 1967, also promoted distrust of the media. He specifically ordered the Pentagon to report the contents of any contact with the media to his public information officers (25:63).

Besides distrusting the media, top officials also tried to manipulate them. Both McNamara and Sylvester held the philosophy that the news was a very useful tool to be used by them for their own purposes. In one instance, McNamara told reporters in a background brief, the use of nuclear weapons was an open possibility in Vietnam. After the story was published, however, he held a press conference. He then stated there was no need for nuclear weapons at the present time and their use should not be open to speculation. His hidden intentions all along were to use the press to warn

the Chinese Communist while at the same time reassuring the American public (25:63; 27:80).

The Credibility Gap. The example by public officials created an air of mutual distrust between the military and the media in Vietnam. The daily briefings in Saigon were a major source of resentment. Detailed information was often scarce at these briefings. A correspondent returning from the battle area often knew more about the facts than the briefing officer. The correspondents often complained that the military's information was misleading and even dishonest. The military retorted that the media were arrogant, untrustworthy, and sensationalist. The resulting credibility gap remained between the military and the media throughout the war (49:85-86; 59:29-31).

The credibility gap naturally caused the media to be skeptical of the military's information. According to Barry Zorithan, chief U.S. spokesman in Saigon, this skepticism is a necessary part of journalism. However, the media must be equally skeptical of all its sources. Often the views of a Vietnamese civilian or a disgruntled soldier were given more credence than the military. In many cases the journalist seldom asked why there happened to be a difference of opinion (42:56). Also, the questionable practice of using anonymous or "blind quotations" as references channeled additional criticism to journalist (60:210). The military's claim was that the media always chose the small portion of trouble makers to represent the military as a whole (51:34).

The military's credibility was often questioned because of the public affairs officers' lack of information. Some of these officers were simply not qualified. Others were often excluded by their superiors from strategy sessions and therefore were uninformed (25:165). To compound this, many of the top military officers who knew what was going on were wary of talking to the media. Without censorship, they did not want to be misquoted and thereby possibly compromise their situation or jeopardize their careers (21:423).

Author Edwin Diamond wrote about a lack of thorough investigative reporting by television after the 1968 Tet Offensive (43:80). The pressure to make a deadline often precluded the effort to sufficiently check the accuracy of a story (15:44; 42:56). This was compounded by the inexperience of many correspondents in Vietnam. They lacked the adequate background to effectively cover the war (42:89; 59:31). One example is, for years the media did not really know who the enemy was. They used the terms Reds, Communist and Vietcong Communist all to label the Vietcong. The truth is, the North Vietnamese were communist but not all of the Vietcong were (43:113-129). Also, few reporters even knew the difference between a mortar and a howitzer or a battalion and a division (40:14; 42:56).

Dan Rather says journalist frequently do not understand the situation overseas and have "often failed at foreign coverage" (61:80). Only a few correspondents stayed long

enough to understand the situation and the environment they were covering. Press tours of duty normally lasted between one year and eighteen months whereas a TV reporter only stayed one to six months (40:14; 49:75). Therefore, many correspondents wrote primarily to please a given audience in the United States. Others wrote to gain the applause of their peers. And still others merely sought to build a reputation for themselves (18:114).

The Turning Point. The Tet offensive took the media by surprise. Although Gen. Westmoreland had predicted an enemy offensive for sometime around the Tet holidays, the media paid little attention to the warning (40:61-63). From the beginning of the offensive the media focused on the havoc and destruction of the fighting. Within several weeks, coverage began to noticeably change. Journalist started turning from their strict reporting to offering analysis and opinions. CBS Evening News anchorman, Walter Cronkite, gave his personal criticism of every aspect of the war including the overall military strategy (40:158-159; 56:210-211; 62:244). NBC's Frank McGee ended an hour-long special report in March 1968 with: "In short, the war, as the Administration has defined it, is being lost" (40:159). This started a precedence. The traditionally neutral network commentators had never previously dared to be so bold about their opinions of the war (44:15-16).

From then on, it seemed the media preferred to cover stories where something went wrong (42:60; 49:83; 63:495). It became "fashionable to be 'a critic of the American' war'" (49:81). The Wall Street Journal reported, "the whole Vietnam effort may be doomed." On March 11, Newsweek printed, "Because our aims are limitless, we are sure to be defeated." Additionally, Time wrote on March 15, "Victory in Vietnam may simply be beyond the grasp of the world's greatest power" (47:198-199).

The media did not stop with criticizing the war. They also began to second guess the military's strategies. Walter Cronkite called Gen. Westmoreland's decision to defend Khe Sanh pure stubbornness because in his opinion it had no military value. After the enemy retreated from the Khe Sanh area, a total of 199 Americans had died whereas an estimated 10,000 enemy had been killed. Even after that, one journalist complained about the costly air support used to win the battle. He eluded to the tremendous tonnage of bombs used and called it a "bankruptcy" tactic (48:142,214).

The media was also guilty of one-sided coverage of atrocities (18:32; 44:9-19; 49:75). The My Lai massacre created no less than 200 stories in the New York Times during 1969 (64:76-77). However, the media gave almost negligible coverage to the thousands of civilians killed in mass executions by the enemy at Hue during the Tet offensive. This is in spite of the fact that the My Lai

massacre was an unlawful act prosecuted by the government whereas the Hue massacre was carried out under order of the enemies top officials (49:75,80).

The results of the final years of Vietnam coverage, beginning around the time of the Tet offensive, created the hostile relationship between the military and the media. After the war, mutual criticism abounded. One of the main reasons for the resentment still harbored toward the media today by many officers is the media's contribution to the anti-war sentiment in America. The men returning from Vietnam were treated with indifference and disdain. They were often regarded as either losers or savages that mercilessly killed innocent civilians (50:34-37). And although the media did not lose the war in Vietnam, it had a definite impact on its outcome. This is evident in the statements released by Hanoi after the war saying they could not have won "without the Western press" (49:76).

Summary. Prior to the Vietnam War, the military and the media shared at best a friendly and at worst an adversarial relationship. On the whole, the media gave objective if not supportive coverage to the military. This was due mainly because of the patriotic feelings by most journalists. Most of the media believed they were responsible for supporting the war effort (29:40). The military, on the other hand, was generally supportive of the media through World War II. Gen. Eisenhower fostered the

relationship by going out of his way to accommodate the media. Also, other high ranking officials made it a point to keep the journalists informed of all newsworthy events. Thus the relationship was characterized by mutual trust and cooperation (32:301; 33:131-132).

The relationship was to come under a strain during the Korean War due to a lack of cooperation mainly from the military. The military reacted strongly to any coverage describing military setbacks. When formal censorship was introduced the military began over-restrictive control to eliminate all bad press. In his short time as Commander, Gen. MacArthur expelled 17 reporters from the combat theater. Though the journalist protested, it was often to no avail for their editors back in the United States more often than not sided with the military (21:338,356).

In the 1950s the government began to restrict the flow of information available to the media. Formally this was accomplished through the classification of enormous amounts of material under the guise of protecting national security (25:64-66). The media claimed the government was merely trying to cover-up its mistakes (25:58; 56:64). Informally, top government officials, including the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, began trying to manipulate the media for their own purposes (25:66; 27:80). The resulting credibility gap was to be a major source of contention in Vietnam. Correspond-

ents accused the military of dishonest practices. The military on the other hand claimed the media was untrustworthy and biased in their coverage (60:31).

During the Tet Offensive a permanent split was created between the military and media. The years of distrust between them culminated in a hostile relationship. The media began making commentary on both American and military policy in Vietnam. Most of the media considered the war to be lost or at least not winable. The military felt the media had done irrevocable damage to the war effort and had created much of the anti-war sentiment (40:158-159; 56:210-211). The result of the coverage during Tet and negative coverage through the end of the war is an abiding distrust by many officers today of the media (51:34-37).

III. The Effects of the Military-Media Relationship

Introduction

The previous chapter presented how and why the relationship between the military and the media have changed. This relationship ranged from mutual trust and confidence to outright hatred and contempt. This latter relationship was fostered during the Vietnam War and culminated during the time of the Tet Offensive. The military were justifiably enraged at the biased reporting during this period. The media conversely were upset over the military's adamant claims of prior progress of the war. The enemy's offensive led them to believe the military's strategies had failed and that they had been lied to from the beginning.

A potential problem currently exist for the public because the hostile nature of the military-media relationship still exist today. This chapter will begin by looking at the effects this relationship has spawned. First, the positive outcomes of a good relationship will be presented along with the negative outcomes of a bad relationship. Next, the public's reaction to the Grenada invasion will be highlighted. Finally, the position of the military and the media will be given with respect to media's access to military operations.

Positive and Negative Outcomes

The best relationship experienced by the military and the media during wartime was during World War II. It can best be described as mutual trust and confidence (51:34). As a result the media overwhelmingly agreed the war had been "accurately and fully reported." Censorship had not prevented the American public from receiving an accurate description of how the war was going. There were no news blackouts or prolonged periods in which the American public was without news coverage. Additionally, with few exceptions, every major battle and campaign were accurately recorded as to their final success or failure (16:176-216).

This was not the case in World War I. Although the relationship was cooperative between the military and the media, censorship was much more strictly enforced. The result was the American public did not always get truthful information. The criticism generated after the war was directed at the government's slanted presentation of the war. The critics claimed too much information provided by the government was strictly for propaganda (16:176).

One major incident involved the supply problems faced by the American Expeditionary Force. The American public was misled during the war by the Committee on Public Information. Furthermore, it was not until after the war that the public received the full information involving the extent of these supply shortages. In 1918, an official

government photograph was released showing training aircraft coming out of a factory. The caption, however, claimed the aircraft were ready for shipment and "hundreds have already been shipped." It further stated that "thousands upon thousands will soon follow" (65:271). In actuality, the war ended without a single American aircraft being sent to the combat theater. Also, of the 4400 tanks contracted for, only 15 reached France, and all of those after the Armistice (21:129).

Several reporters had partially uncovered the story of supply shortages. These reporters strongly protested the decision to censor these facts and appealed to the Secretary of War, Newton Baker. Secretary Baker denied approval to publish the story on the grounds of the negative effect it would have on the military command. One correspondent decided to defy the censorship due to the importance of the story. He returned to New York and wrote a series of articles partially exposing the supply "blunders" he had witnessed. The War Department immediately withdrew his accreditation, fined his newspaper \$10,000 and considered taking legal action against him (21:130). After the war, a congressional investigation was conducted of the release of the false claim of aircraft shipments. It was finally dismissed as the mistake of a young, over-enthusiastic government newswriter (65:271).

Without censorship at the beginning of the Korean War, the relationship of the military and the media was often characterized by distrust. Correspondents ended up polarized into two groups. The majority reported the official line given by the military while the other group remained skeptical and critical of the military. The military policy was to give out as little information as possible. Additionally, much of the official information contained exaggerations of the number of casualties and damage inflicted. Ironically, some American correspondents began using information received from two Western correspondents attached to the North Korean forces. Their information proved to be accurate and more plausible than the second hand information released by the U.S. military (21:336-356).

During the peace talks, the correspondents with the Korean delegation had free access to all the information being negotiated. The United Nations (UN) correspondents, conversely, worked under complete censorship during the peace talks. It was later discovered that the UN negotiators were the cause of the stalemate during the peace negotiations. Officially, Secretary of State, Dean Acheson announced the UN were negotiating for a cease-fire based on the thirty-eighth parallel. In reality they were actually holding out for a cease-fire thirty-two miles north of this position. The truth was the North Korean and Chinese

delegates had been willing to settle for the thirty-eighth parallel (21:252-253).

The relationship of the military and the media was most severely strained during the Vietnam War. Because of the split between the military and the media, only negative side effects have been produced. Their hostile relationship has resulted in an enduring lack of trust and confidence between them. Another major result described by British newspaper editor, Harold Evans, is the moral self-righteousness of the American press (66:94). Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, feels this has led some editors and reporters to believe they possess all the necessary knowledge to decide what is or is not in the interest of national security (67:2). Essentially the media has developed the power to veto the decisions of all three branches of government. In a way, it has become a more powerful fourth branch of government (68:34).

An extreme example shows to what extent the power of the media can be taken and distorted by some of its members. Robert Sheer, a journalist who has interviewed President Carter, told attendees at a journalistic convention that getting the story justified the means of obtaining the necessary information. In his words,

the journalist's job is to get the story by breaking into their offices, by bribing, by seducing people, by lying, by anything else to break through that palace guard. (11:22-23)

Another example of this is clearly seen in the media's decision to publish the military's secret documents covering the Vietnam War, the Pentagon Papers. The New York Times did not hesitate to publish the documents when the military was in the process of seeking a court injunction to stop them. It was the first time in history the government had used the courts to try and stop publication of material, but they failed. The courts upheld the New York Times' right to publish the documents. The crucial point is that the government would have been unable to stop the publishing even if the court had ruled in their favor. At best, they could have only sought punishment of the violator (28:249).

One further example shows the media today, more than ever, maintains they have the right to decide for themselves on matters of national security. A panel of top media personnel and top government officials were brought together for a seminar. They were given a hypothetical case involving the leak of top secret information to the media regarding a new technology satellite. The reason given for the leak was that the satellite might not perform as specified. However, the news of the existence of this satellite would have a detrimental effects on the arms control process and national security (78:1-7).

Two members of the media were questioned as to what they would do in the following situation: The government has ask you to hold the information until the courts can decide

whether or not it is in the national interest to hold the story. Mr. Van Gordon Sauter, executive vice president of CBS Broadcasting Group, stated he would not discuss the legal rights of his authority to broadcast the story. It would be an "editorial decision" whether to hold the story or broadcast the story before the courts had time to act (78:53-58).

Meg Greenfield, an editor for The Washington Post concurred with Mr Sauter. She stated

We would like to hear what you [the military] have to say about our story. [But] We will resist being told by you or by the court whether or not we can print it, and we will make the decision. We will not cooperate with you in taking us to court. It's our decision; not yours; not the courts. (78:59)

The public, on the other hand, has showed great distress over publishing secret military information. Polls showed almost 75% disapproved the printing of the Pentagon Papers (28:297). New York Times managing editor, A.M. Rosenthal, defended his act on the grounds that the documents were published to make the American people think. If that was his only reason for publishing the documents, then he failed. A Gallup poll found that 45% of the people surveyed had no opinion as to the contents of the information (69:52-53).

Instead of making more information available to the public, this will probably have the opposite effect. Walter Lippman, called the greatest journalist of his time, said it

would be counter-productive to have classified material made public. The result would make the military self-conscious of everything they wrote. The end result would be a falsification of documents to make a person or situation sound good if brought out in public (15:43).

Freedom of the press, as established in the First Amendment, is most effective when the public is given a broad spectrum of information to form its own opinions. It was not specifically intended to allow publishers and broadcasters to be able to say whatever they want (70:186; 71:26). However, the public was not well served in Vietnam in regards to the information it received. The malicious criticism published and broadcast about the military resulted in public confusion over the war in Vietnam (72:38). A 1967 Gallup poll revealed only 48% of those surveyed had an understanding of what the Vietnam War was all about (17:63).

The American system has always allowed public debate of its policies. The problem in Vietnam was not the debate of American military policy. The problem was that the debate should not have been between the military and the media. The military acted under the guidelines set by the president and thus was not allowed to fully engage the enemy. These guidelines seriously hampered Gen. Westmoreland's ability to conduct the war and virtually made it impossible to accomplish his mission in Vietnam. Therefore, instead of

debating and criticizing the military leaders, the media should have redirected their criticism to the political leadership (47:336-337; 50:90; 73:66-67).

The Grenada Operation

Fred W. Friendly, the former president of CBS News, said the public is beginning to turn against the press due to its abuses. Ultimately he feels this may have harmful effects on freedom of the press (74:48). Part of this may be seen in the support the public gave to the military in regards to excluding the media initially from the Grenada invasion. A New York Times/CBS poll showed 55% supported the decision while 31% opposed (75:57). A Newsweek poll showed similar results with 53% approval and 34% disapproval (76:65). Also, letters written to NBC showed a 10 to 1 majority in favor of the military's exclusion of the media in Grenada (77:73).

Although the public initially endorsed the military's exclusion of the media in Grenada, the Constitution guarantees freedom of the press. Additionally, the military has sworn to support and defend the Constitution of the United States -- including freedom of the press listed in the First Amendment. However, other freedoms and rights may legitimately outweigh the rights of the media (67:2). The Grenada operation is an example of one such instance. Secretary of Defense Weinberger made the decision that security of the forces during the operation outweighed the consideration of including the media (2:A23; 8:A1).

In January 1984, a panel was formed at the request of Gen. John W. Vessey Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The charter of the panel was to make recommendations concerning the media's presence during military operations. The panel, made up of military and media experts, unanimously agreed on one major point:

The U.S. media should cover U.S. military operations to the maximum degree possible consistent with mission security and the safety of U.S. forces. (12:23-24)

They did, however, exclude top secret operations such as the Iranian rescue attempt and the Son Tay raid during the Vietnam War (12:24).

U.S. Navy Captain James Wentz expressed a somewhat different opinion. His criticism surrounds the on-scene media's requirement for three vital assets in the critical first stages of an operation: transportation, communications, and the time of personnel for interviews. He suggest that the media contends with on-scene commanders for these valuable assets. Therefore, the media tend to only disrupt or interfere with the execution of an operation. His proposal is the exclusion of the media during the initial phase of U.S. military operations. He further states that by federally regulating the media's access to a conflict and protecting certain military information, American lives can be saved (73:65-67).

Summary

The relationship between the military and the media was extremely positive during World War II. As a result, the American public received accurate coverage throughout the war (16:176-216). The relationship was not as positive during World War I and the Korean War. In these two wars, the military exercised tight control of the media and practiced over-restrictive censorship policies. The result was insufficient, often inaccurate information was made available to the general public (21; 65).

The Vietnam War was different than all the previous conflicts. The relationship between the military and the media became antagonistic and even hostile. There were several major effects of this negative relationship. Because no censorship was ever formally imposed, the military had no direct control over the information sent to the United States. Therefore, inaccurate, often biased information was published and broadcasted. Also, the authority and responsibility of the media began to come in conflict with the other branches of the government. This was due to a new perception the media had of its own power. The media began to operate as though it could make the sole determination concerning what was in the best interest of the nation. This, then, led to the publishing of military secrets. Ultimately, all of this fostered the abiding distrust between the military and media which may have been

a factor in their exclusion from the Grenada operation (50; 66; 67; 68).

In the eyes of the public, the military was justified in banning the media from Grenada. However, constitutionally and historically the media have always been provided the right to cover military actions. Therefore, in theory, both the military and the media have recently agreed that most military operations should have media coverage. Consideration must be given to the nature of the operation with maximum priority given to the safety of the forces involved. Therefore, in smaller, top secret type operations the military can justify exclusion of the media. However, if the situation becomes protracted, the media should be allowed in the area as soon as feasible (12:25).

IV. Future Military-Media Relationship Considerations

Introduction

This thesis has presented how the relationship between the military and the media has radically changed from World War I until the present. In World War I, censorship was strict but the military had a good working relationship with the media. Compared to the allies, the American journalists had the greatest amount of freedom (28:72; 30:320-321). In World War II, the relationship between the military and the media was the best it has ever been. Their mutual trust and confidence had the biggest effect on World War II being the best reported war in history (16:176-177; 31:6; 32:300). The Korean War marked the beginnings of the adversarial relationship. Without censorship, the military bitterly complained about the media and their coverage. When formal censorship was implemented, the military overreacted and began restricting security and political information (21:342-356; 34:58; 35:36). Finally, in Vietnam the adversarial relationship between the military and the media increased in intensity. Eventually, it degenerated to a level of antagonism and bitterness. The distrust and resentment created during the Vietnam War is still present today (21; 40; 42; 49; 51; 52; 59).

Chapter II also investigated the question of why the relationship between the military and the media changed.

During the two world wars the patriotic feelings of most journalists helped foster the initial good rapport they had with the military. Many journalists overreacted and voluntarily suppressed information that contained no security value (16; 21; 29; 30). The military also went out of their way in World War II to assist the journalists as much as possible. However, a major policy change occurred after the war (32).

Under presidential orders, the military was allowed to classify information for internal use only. This classification system represented the first time the government had formally restricted the flow of information in other than wartime. The media's reacted suspiciously toward the military's motives and claimed the system was primarily used to hide mismanagement and abuses (25:57; 33:119-120). Additionally, top government officials, such as the Secretary of Defense, began trying to manipulate the media for their own benefits. This would ultimately lead to the credibility gap which is still in evidence today (25:63; 27:80).

One final factor explains why the relationship between the military and the media was so negative during the Vietnam War. That factor was the biased, one-sided reporting by the media during the Tet Offensive. An American military victory was portrayed as a demoralizing defeat (18:32; 40; 44; 49). During this time most of the

media gave up on the military's ability to win the war. Editorials and commentators criticized everything from the military leadership to military tactics (40:; 47:198-199; 48:142,214). The American military personnel returning from Vietnam were treated with indifference and disdain (49:34-37). The media's contribution to this anti-military sentiment had a profound effect on the abiding distrust of the media by many military officers today (50:34-37).

Whenever a positive relationship has existed between the military and media, positive benefits have resulted. World War II was the best reported war in history because of the good relationship between commanders and journalist (16:176). Conversely, this thesis has shown that when a less than positive relationship has existed, negative effects have been noted. In World War I and during the Korean War, less information was available and it often included exaggerations of accomplishments and excluded any mistakes or wrong doings (21:129,336-356; 34:35; 65:269-272).

A side effect of the media's relationship with the military in Vietnam is its emergence as a very powerful institution. One TV anchorman, Walter Cronkite, was compared in popularity to the astronauts who had landed on the moon (62:262). With this new-found power, the media has often put itself above the government. Reporters and editors decide what is in the national interest, unconcerned

with what the courts will rule. Many do not believe they are accountable for the effects of their work. Still, others feel the First Amendment gives them the right to do whatever is necessary to obtain information. Often this can be at the expense of others rights (11:22-23; 67:2; 68:34; 71:15; 78).

Although the media published and broadcasted a large volume of information during the Vietnam War this did not insure the public was well served. In fact, a majority of the general public did not have a good understanding of what the Vietnam War was about (17:63; 72:38). Also, instead of concentrating their criticism on the Administration's policies in Vietnam, they criticized those who had to carry out the policies (73).

The latest military operation, the Grenada invasion, surprised the media. First, they were left behind for two days and then the public supported their exclusion from the operation. The exclusion of the media by the military can be partially attributable to the lingering effects of their poor relationship during the Vietnam War (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6). Later, the military conceded that it is in the national interest to have the media accompany future operations. They also recognized that there are instances when the media should be excluded. These instances cover situations where mission security or personnel safety will possibly be jeopardized (12:22-25; 67:2).

Recommendations for the Future

For the military and the media to work together during future operations, several prerequisites must be worked out. First, military officers must be reacquainted with and accept the media's function in a democratic society. Second, some types of constraints or controls must be placed upon the media during combat operations. Next, the media needs to acquaint itself with the military's way of doing business. Finally, the credibility between the military and the media must be restored.

Acceptance of the media. The main purpose of the media is to keep the public informed. Also, it must be remembered that the public has the right to know what its elected officials are doing. Further, the more informed the public is kept, the more they will be able to make intelligent decisions (12:25; 42:55). Then why does the military refrain from releasing certain information?

In his book, Minimum Disclosure, Juergen Heise referenced several reasons why the military does not disclose more information. One very significant factor is military officials simply do not feel obligated to pass on information for public use, whether or not it was unclassified. Another contribution to the lack of information flow is military bureaucracy. The Pentagon's predetermined restrictions govern the information officer's ability to release a variety of information (25:182-183).

This creates a problem because the media is overwhelmingly dependent on the military to provide it with information. The vast majority of what was published and broadcasted about the Vietnam War was information released by the military (42:40).

Information officers in Vietnam often did not have sufficiently detailed information for their daily briefings. At other times, they had more information but they were unwilling to volunteer it. Instead of offering what they knew, they would wait until asked specifically about an event or incident (42:50). Marine Lt. Gen. Maloney reminds the military that, "The press is not the enemy." He further admits that commanders and information officers must take time to deal with the media even when its painful. They cannot allow the media to go off uniformed to report only part of the story (42:74-77).

Control of the Media. To adequately and fairly control the media, three interrelated types of control are required to insure an unbiased, accurate information flow: A new accreditation policy for journalists, censorship, and a fairness advocate.

In Vietnam, there was a definite need for restraint by the media especially in terms of the number of journalists. William Hammond, a Vietnam historian, said, "The Vietnam War was atrociously over-reported." He further adds that there were too many reporters covering the war (42:10). Drew

Middleton, a correspondent with The New York Times, tells the reason for the problem. Almost anyone could receive accreditation as a journalist in Vietnam. This led to a lot of "free-lancers" that had neither reputation nor position at stake. They wrote whatever sold the best, and this was most often the shocking or sensational type story (79:93).

The first step, then, for controlling the media should be a change of accreditation policy. One proposed solution is to instigate a standard background investigation (80:15). However, accreditation should not be used to limit the access of the media. A balance of reporting must be maintained. Investigation could be used to limit potential correspondents to responsible individuals who work for established organizations. Then the accredited journalists would receive full cooperation from the military in regards to information, transportation and above all access to the action (79:25).

Censorship has been the most highly mentioned form of control. It has supporters among the military and the media. The following are a few examples of the support for censorship. C.C. Sulzberger of the New York Times said, "It was insane of the U.S. military establishment never to have had the courage to establish reasonable, effective military censorship in the theater" (56:204). Jack Foisie of the Los Angeles Times echoes these sentiments adding, censorship would have been preferred in Vietnam (81:150). Also,

retired Maj. Gen. Sidle, the chief public affairs officer in Vietnam for two years, supported censorship. He says a majority of the media in Vietnam, including many bureau chiefs, would have supported censorship. Finally, Howard K. Smith, former TV reporter and correspondent, firmly believed there should have been military censorship in Vietnam. Not to save the government from any embarrassment, but to protect the soldier in battle (42:61-62,89).

Not having censorship in Vietnam had pronounced effects. Historian William Hammond says, without censorship to restrain journalists, the military had to worry about the appearances of evil. Although there have always been civilian casualties in war, America's leaders tried to lessen their numbers by making rules to govern the fighting of the war.

The so-called 'Rules of Engagement'. . . made military operations less efficient and more costly. In the end, more civilians were probably killed than would have been -- and more American fighting men -- all for the sake of appearances. (42:63)

Another effect of fighting a war without censorship is a loss of candor by military commanders. In World War II, the military was open and honest with the media because they knew censors would review what the journalists wrote. In Vietnam, anything said might end up available to the enemy (79:90,92). A study at the U.S. Army War College found censorship would be a positive factor in restoring the openness of the military. The responses of the officers

surveyed indicated a more trusting attitude would be present if censorship was enforced (51:18).

Finally, one last requirement to help control the media would involve some type of fairness advocate during wartime. Sweden has had a fulltime press council since 1916. It hears complaints from individuals about mistreatment by the press. Britain also has had a working press council since 1953 (82:219-220). A similar type of council or ombudsman could be established as a central point of appeals for the military and the media (79:22-25; 81:302; 82:219-220).

To be effective, this fairness advocacy council would be appointed by the President and comprised of military and media representatives. They would establish the precedents to be followed by the military and the media with regards to censorship. The board would monitor both sides to insure neither took advantage of the other. Finally, it would be a court of appeals. If the media had a story they wanted told but it had been censored, the council would make a ruling. Also, if the military thought they were receiving unfair coverage, the council could be sought to provide satisfaction (79:22-25).

Credibility. The necessity for honest and integrity cannot be overemphasized (12:30; 80:15). Some officers often tried to be evasive or manipulative. In the end, this exacerbated the situation and the officer usually ended up regretting his actions (49:86; 51:17). If information must

be held for security reasons, the military is better off saying nothing. According to Peter Jennings of ABC News, rather than be lied to, the media is more receptive to statements like, "This is as much as I can tell you at this time" or "I can't talk about that" (79:56-57).

At a 1972 convention of newspaper editors, attendees listed the information officers as the key element to credibility. They concluded that the military information officer must be professional and fully knowledgeable. Also, they must have high enough rank to make decisions about what is news without being intimidated by commanders (56:232; 57:45-46).

Additionally, credibility will be affected by the way in which facts are presented or relayed. In Vietnam, the military used the term pinpoint bombing. To the military this meant targets were hit with minimal loss of civilian lives or property. To the media and the general public, pinpoint bombing had the connotation of perfect bombing with no civilian casualties. The military never clarified the statement, pinpoint bombing, until it was too late. When pictures were released showing the results of U.S. bombing in North Vietnam, most people were shocked. Although it was only a lack of understanding, it led to a decrease of credibility for the military (42:34).

The media will need to work on building their credibility also. Norman Isaacs, former president of the

American Society of Newspaper editors, said the press' biggest problem is not publishing retractions to correct inaccuracies (64:69). During the Tet Offensive, stories covering the early fighting received front page coverage. Additionally, the initial tone set by the media spelled disaster for the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. However, when the fighting subsided, it was evident that the enemy had suffered a crushing military defeat. Instead of making this clear to the American public, most of the major news organizations did not try to give a final analysis of the overall offensive. The few stories written as corrections or overviews were usually relegated to the "back pages" (40:714-716).

Accuracy by the media is as important as honesty is for the military. Barry Zorithan, chief U.S. spokesman in Vietnam, said, "Unfortunately, too often today in our media, the deadline comes before the assurance of honesty" (42:56). Television and press associations were cited as frequent offenders. Their pursuit of beating out the competition for the major headline story or getting an 'exclusive' resulted in distorted coverage (59:31).

Additionally, the media lost credibility for focusing on the negative (42:60; 49:83; 63:495). It was "fashionable" to be a critic of the war (49:81). An example is the reporting of atrocities. After the My Lai massacre was made public, everyone had an atrocity story to tell (21:393).

Most of the time, the negative reporting was published and broadcasted to the exclusion of the military's excellent combat performance (12:29). Even when the military did get positive coverage the reporter often ended the story conditionally on a negative note (80:14).

Finally, it is very easy to publish or broadcast facts, but this does not insure the truth is conveyed (15:52-53). The media, and especially television, must keep its reports in the proper context (40:39). One of television's biggest shortcomings is its narrow focus upon the immediate. The danger is, the broader context is often necessary to a full understanding of the situation (81:148). The television interview which cuts out part of a conversation can create a false impression. The soldier who makes a complaint may be making a statement about his immediate predicament. However, when the story airs on television, it may sound like a political statement (79:91,153).

Media Education. A problem experienced in Vietnam stemmed from the lack of qualified journalists. Many lacked the background and knowledge to adequately report military operations (42:89; 59:31). The epitome of this is the reporter from a national medium who asked, "What is a battalion?" during one of the daily MACV briefings (42:56). Drew Middleton estimates that almost half of the papers and television stations in the country have people with no experience covering the military today. Almost certainly

they will be the ones covering the future military operations. Therefore, editors and publishers must be persuaded to use better caliber people or help them get some experience. To do this, journalists who will cover the military during crises or war should be exposed to peacetime exercises such as the NATO Reforger exercise (79:98-105).

Personal Perceptions

In World War I and the Korean War, the military had the upper hand on the media, and they abused their power. The American public suffered by being less informed about the wars without proper cause. During the Vietnam War the media had the power over the military, and beginning in 1968, they began to misuse their power. Only in World War II was their a happy medium established. This balance of power led to more accurate and informative coverage of the war. A balance is what the military and the media should strive for.

I think the problem in Vietnam was not a lack of information but rather an over abundance of information. There was too much conflicting information; too much for the general public to synthesize. The following quote from Mark Twain appropriately sums up my perception of the media coverage in Vietnam: "The problem isn't that people don't know enough, it's that they know too much of what ain't so."

Another quote indicating the communist philosophy of Nikolai Lenin has some interesting implications. Lenin ask:

Why should freedom of speech and freedom of press be allowed? Why should a government which is doing what it believes to be right allow itself to be criticized? It should not allow opposition by lethal weapons. Ideas are much more fatal things than guns. Why should any man be allowed to buy a printing press and disseminate pernicious opinions calculated to embarrass the government? (57:156)

For the democratic society the implication is that the media can do as much harm as it does good. Take, for example, the national reporter who believes the First Amendment guarantees him the right to lie, cheat or even break into private property to gather information for a story (11:22-23). We do not give our police force that right. They have to obtain a search warrant even when dealing with a known felon. Can a journalist honestly feel this is his right? I know this is probably only representative of a small minority, but the potential cost of irresponsible reporting far outweighs the effects of any media control during wartime.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Vessey, initiated a study by active duty and retired military and media personnel. The study was commissioned to determine

How do we conduct military operations in a manner that safeguards the lives of our military and protects the security of the operation while keeping the American public informed through the media? (84)

The final recommendations and comments of that study are included in Appendix B. This report was since adapted by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as policy for

military relations with the media during crises or conflicts.

One conspicuous exclusion from this report is a recommendation for censorship during the next military crises or conflict. How soon we forget. Retired Maj Gen Sidle was the panel chairman and it was he that said a majority of the media in Vietnam would have supported censorship. Many Saigon bureau chiefs had even asked him to push for censorship (42:89). Wasn't this also the case in the Korean War (21:337)? Instead the report recommends that ground rules be established to govern the media's actions, but only as few as possible. After my research, I strongly feel that censorship is a necessity for the military to properly conduct its operations.

Along with censorship, no live TV cameras should be permitted for two reasons. First, a lesson learned in Vietnam by former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Phil Goulding, was, the "first reports are always wrong." Additionally, the second and third ones might not be much better (42:32). Therefore, a live camera is particularly vulnerable to passing on false or misleading information. Secondly, research was performed on Vietnam War reporting. The final data did not indicate that "instantaneous" coverage of the war by television added to or insured accurate understanding of the war (44:9-19). Therefore, taped television reports will be more reliable because false information can be edited or changed.

For censorship to work, however, the preconditions listed in the previous section of this chapter must be established. First, a policy of accreditation for journalists must be established to insure quality people cover the military, while at the same time maintaining balanced reporting. Also, some type of fairness advocacy panel must be formed to develop and implement censorship. This panel should consist of retired media and military personnel to be full-time monitors of the operations of both the military and the media. They must also be given the authority and power to rectify any wrongs detected.

Finally, I wholeheartedly agree with the panels recommendations for cooperation with the media by the military. This includes planning for the media's transportation and communications requirements. Also, the plan to educate both the military and the media about each others' roles is very necessary. However, I disagree with one last point in the panel's findings. I do not believe the military and the media need to have an adversarial relationship. Peter Jennings says an adversarial relationship is counterproductive and that if it is present, understanding between the military and media will decrease. He feels the truly professional journalist can have a good relationship with the military without becoming a "patsy in any way, shape or form" (79:154,156).

Appendix A: Media Coverage During the 1968

Tet Offensive (83:303-321)

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
ABC Television	81	130
CBS Television	83	178
NBC Television	65	142

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Time	97	169
Newsweek	49	276

	New York Times <u>Neg</u>	<u>Pos</u>	Washington Post <u>Neg</u>	<u>Pos</u>
Reporting from Vietnam	108	77	100	89
Reporting from the U.S.	85	33	64	39
Commentary from Vietnam	52	11	19	2
Commentary from the U.S.	89	9	41	21

All the above stories were published or broadcasted from
1 February through 31 March 1968.

APPENDIX B: CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel (84)

RECOMMENDATION 1:

That public affairs planning for military operations be conducted concurrently with operational planning. This can be assured in the great majority of cases by implementing the following:

- a. Review all joint planning documents to assure that JCS guidance in public affairs matters is adequate.
- b. When sending implementing orders to Commanders in Chief in the field, direct that the CINC planners include consideration of public information aspects.
- c. Inform the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) of an impending military operation at the earliest possible time. This information should appropriately come from the Secretary of Defense.
- d. Complete the plan, currently being studied, to include a public affairs planning cell in OJCS to help ensure adequate public affairs review of CINC plans.
- e. Insofar as possible and appropriate, institutionalize these steps in written guidance or policy.

Comments

1. Under the current system of planning for military operations, provisions exist to include public affairs planning but it is neither mandatory nor certain that current joint planning documents are adequate from a public affairs standpoint. The basic purpose of this recommendation is to help assure that public affairs aspects are considered as soon as possible in the planning cycle for any appropriate military operation and that the public affairs planning guidance is adequate.

2. The panel was unanimous in feeling that every step should be taken to ensure public affairs participation in planning and/or review at every appropriate level. Recommendations 1a, b, and d are designed to assist in implementing this consideration.

3. Panel discussions indicated that it is difficult to determine in advance in all cases when public affairs planning should be included. The panel felt that the best procedure would be to include such planning if there were even a remote chance it would be needed. For example, a strictly covert operation, such as the Son Tay raid in North Vietnam, still requires addressing public affairs considerations if only to be sure that after action coverage adequately fulfills the obligation to inform the American people. Very small, routine operations might be exceptions.

4. Recommendation 1c is self-explanatory. The ASD(PA), as the principal public affairs advisor to both the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, JCS, must be brought into the planning process as soon as possible. In view of the DOD organization, the panel felt that this should be the responsibility of the Secretary of Defense.

5. We received indications that some commanders take the position that telling something to his public affairs officer is tantamount to telling it to the media. All members of the panel, including its public affairs officers decried this tendency and pointed out that a public affairs specialist is the least likely to release material prematurely to the media. Although the panel did not consider the matter officially, there is no doubt that public affairs officers are just as dedicated to maintaining military security as are operations officers and must know what is going on in a command if they are to do their job!

RECOMMENDATION 2:

When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should support the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary.

Comments

1. Media representatives appearing before the panel were unanimous in being opposed to pools in general. However, they all also agreed that they would cooperate in pooling agreements if that were necessary for them to obtain early access to an operation.

2. The media representatives generally felt that DOD should select the organizations to participate in pools, and the organizations should select the individual reporters. (See Recommendation 3.)

3. The media were unanimous in requesting that pools be terminated as soon as possible and "full coverage" allowed. "Full coverage" appeared to be a relative term, and some agreed that even this might be limited in cases where security, logistics, and the size of the operation created limitations that would not permit any and all bona fide reporters to cover an event. The panel felt that any limitations would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis but agreed that maximum possible coverage should be permitted.

4. The media agreed that prior notification of a pooling organization should be as close to H-Hour as possible to minimize the possibility of a story breaking too soon, especially if speculative stories about the operation should appear in media not in the pool or be initiated by one of their reporters not privy to the pool. This would require a pool media decision as to whether to break the story early, despite the embargo on such a break that is inherent in early notification for pooling purposes. The media representatives were not in agreement on this matter but did agree generally that they should not release aspects of the story that they had been made aware of during DOD early notification and which did not appear in the stories already out or in preparation; nor should this privy information be used to confirm speculation concerning an operation.

5. In this connection, the media generally did not agree with a view voiced by some members of the panel that, absolutely to guarantee security, pool notification would not be made until the first military personnel had hit the beach or airhead even though advance military preparation could speed the poolers to the site in the least time possible. The panel did not take a position on this, but some felt that carefully planned pool transportation could meet the media's objections in many, possibly most, cases. For example, in remote areas the pool could be assembled in a location close to the operation using overseas correspondent who would not have to travel from the United States. This is a subject worthy of detailed discussion in the military-media meetings proposed in Recommendation 8a.

6. In this connection, the panel recognized that in many areas of the world an established press presence would be encountered by U.S. forces irrespective of a decision as to whether or not a pool would be used. This consideration would have to be included in initial public affairs planning.

7. There was no unanimity among the media representatives as to whether correspondents, pooled or otherwise, should be in the "first wave" or any other precise point in the operation. All did agree that media presence should be as soon as possible and feasible. The panel believes that such timing has to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

8. Neither the media nor the panel agreed on use in a pool of full-time media employees who are not U.S. citizens. The media tended to agree that, if the parent organization considered such employees reliable, they should be allowed to be pool members. Based on public affairs experience in Vietnam, there were many cases where such employees proved entirely reliable; however, some did not. The panel suggests that this has to be another case-by-case situation.

9. There was also a divergence of opinion among the media as to what news organizations should make up a pool, although all agreed that the most important criterion was probably which organizations cover the widest American audience. Several media representatives suggested specific media pools, but, unfortunately, they varied widely. The panel was not in full agreement on this subject either, but did agree that the following types of news organizations should have top priority. The panel further agreed that DoD should take the factors discussed in this paragraph into account when designating news organizations to participate in a pool.

a. Wire services. AP and UPI to have priority. A reporter from each and a photographer from either one should be adequate. In a crash situation where inadequate planning time has been available, a reporter from one wire service and a photographer from the other could provide a two-person pool.

b. Television. A two-person TV pool (one correspondent, one film/sound man) can do the job for a brief time although perhaps minimally. All TV representatives agreed that a three-person team is better and can do more. A panel suggestion that a six-person team (one cameraman, one sound man, and one reporter each from ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN) seemed agreeable to the four networks although the load on the two technicians would be difficult to handle. The panel has no suggestion on this except that TV pool representatives must have high priority with two representatives as the minimum and augmentation to depend on space available. This should be a matter of discussion at the meetings suggested in recommendation 8a. The question of radio participation in pools must also be resolved.

c. News Magazines. One reporter and one color photographer.

d. Daily newspapers. At least one reporter. The panel agreed with newspaper representatives that, although newspapers do use wire service copy and photos, at least one newspaper pooler is needed for the special aspects of newspaper coverage not provided by the wire services. Criteria suggested for use when deciding which newspaper(s) to include in a pool included: Circulation, whether the newspaper has a news service, does the newspaper specialize in military and foreign affairs, and does it cover the Pentagon regularly. There was some agreement among the media representatives that there are probably not more than 8-10 newspapers which should be considered for pooling under these criteria.

10. In addition to the type of embargo necessary when a pooling news agency is notified in advance about a military operation (i.e., nothing to be said about it until it begins) there is another type applicable to some military operations. This second type was used with great success in Vietnam and restricts media accompanying the forces from filing or releasing any information about the progress of the operation until the on-scene commander determines that such release will not impair his security by informing the opposing commander about his objectives. Normally, this is not a problem as general objectives quickly become apparent. In the case of a special objective, there might be some delay in authorizing stories until either the objective is attained or it is obvious the enemy commander knows what it is. In any case, this type of embargo is an option to planners that the media would almost certainly accept as opposed to not having correspondents with the forces from the outset or close to it. The panel did not have a consensus on this matter.

11. Media representatives emphasized the readiness of correspondents to accept, as in the past, the physical dangers inherent in military operations and agreed that the personal security of correspondents should not be a factor in planning media participation in military operations.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

In connection with the use of pools, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend to the Secretary of Defense that he study the matter of whether to use a pre-established and constantly updated accreditation or notification list of correspondents in case of a military operation for which a pool is required or just the establishment of a news agency list for use in the same circumstances.

Comments

1. The panel envisions that in either case the agency would select the individual(s) to be its representatives in the pool. In the case of the accreditation/notification list, there would presumably be several names from each news agency/organization to provide the necessary flexibility. The agency would have provided the names in advance to DoD. In the case of the news agency/organization list, DoD would decide which agencies would be in the pool and the agencies would pick the person(s) desired without reference to a list. There was no agreement as to whether DoD should have approval authority of the individuals named to be pool members. The media representatives were unanimously against such approval as were some members of the panel. However, other panel members believed that in the case of an extremely sensitive operation, DoD should have such authority.

2. There was no agreement among either those who appeared before the panel or among the panel itself on this matter. More in both groups seemed to favor simply establishing a news agency list including wire services, television, news magazines and newspapers from which to pick when DOD establishes a pool.

3. This particular problem is one that should be resolved in advance of a military operation and should be a subject of discussion in connection with the military-media meetings suggested in Recommendation 8a.

4. This recommendation does not concern the accreditation that would have to be given each correspondent covering an operation, either at first or later, by the senior on-site commander. Traditionally, this accreditation is limited to establishing that the individual is a bona fide reporter (represents an actual media organization).

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That a basic tenet governing media access to military operations should be voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines or ground rules established and issued by the military. These rules should be as few as possible and should be worked out during the planning process for each operation. Violations would mean exclusion of the correspondent(s) concerned from further coverage of the operation.

Comments

1. The media were in support of this concept as opposed to formal censorship of any type, and all media representatives agreed that their organizations would abide by these ground rules. This arrangement would place a heavy responsibility on the news media to exercise care so as not to inadvertently jeopardize mission security or troop safety.

2. The guidelines/ground rules are envisioned to be similar to those used in Vietnam (a copy at Enclosure 6). Recognizing that each situation will be different, public affairs planners could use the Vietnam rules as a starting point, as they were worked out empirically during Vietnam by public affairs and security personnel and, for the most part, in cooperation with news media on the scene. All media representatives who addressed the issue agreed that the ground rules worked out satisfactorily in Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Public affairs planning for military operations should include sufficient equipment and qualified military personnel whose function is to assist correspondents in covering the operation adequately.

Comments

1. The military personnel referred to in this recommendation are normally called escorts; however, this term has developed some unfortunate connotations as far as the media are concerned. In any case, the panel's recommendation is designed to provide personnel who, acting as agents of the on-scene commander, will perform such functions as keep the correspondents abreast of the situation; arrange for interviews and briefings; arrange for their transportation to appropriate locations; ensure they are fed and housed, if necessary; and be as helpful as possible consistent with security and troop safety.

2. Almost all of the media representatives agreed that such escorts are desirable, especially at the beginning of an operation, to assist in media coverage. As the operation progresses and the reporters become familiar with what is going on, the media representatives were generally less enthusiastic about this type of assistance.

3. All the media were against escorts if their goal was to try to direct, censor, or slant coverage. However, most agreed that pointing out possible ground rule violations and security problems would be part of the escort's responsibility.

4. The point was made to the panel and the media representatives that escorts were often required in Vietnam, especially after about mid-1968, without many problems arising. One of the major advantages of escorts was making sure the reporters had a full and accurate understanding of the operation being covered.

5. The senior on-scene commander will decide how long escorting should continue after an operation begins.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Planners should carefully consider media communications requirements to assure the earliest feasible availability. However, these communications must not interfere with combat and combat support operations. If necessary and feasible, plans should include communicative facilities dedicated to the news media.

Comments

1. Media representatives were unanimous in preferring provision for use of their own communications or using local civilian communications when possible. They were also unanimous, however, in the need for access to military communications if nothing else were available, especially in the opening stages of an operation.

2. Permitting media coverage without providing some sort of filing capability does not make sense unless an embargo is in force.

3. Although not discussed in depth during the panel meetings, communications availability is an obvious factor in determining press pool size. Planners should consider the varying deadlines of the different types of media. For example, newsmagazine reporters usually have more time to file thus permitting courier service as a possible satisfactory solution from their standpoint.

4. There was considerable discussion of the possibility of media-provided satellite uplinks being a future threat to security if technology permits real-time or near real-time copy and film/tape processing. The media representatives felt that such a possibility was not imminent; however, the discussions resulted in Recommendation 3d being included in the report. One panel member made the point that such real-time or near real-time capability has long existed for radio news including the Murrow reporting during World War II.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Planning factors should include provision for intra- and inter-theater transportation support of the media. There was no Panel comment on this matter.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

a. CJCS should recommend to the Secretary of Defense that a program be undertaken by ASD(PA) for top military public affairs representatives to meet with news organization leadership, to include meetings with individual news organizations, on a reasonably regular basis to discuss mutual problems, including relationships with the media during military operations and exercises. This program should begin as soon as possible.

b. Enlarge programs already underway to improve military understanding of the media via public affairs instruction in service schools and colleges, to include media participation when possible.

c. Seek improved media understanding of the military through more visits by commanders and line officers to news organizations.

d. CJCS should recommend that the Secretary of Defense host at an early date a working meeting with representatives of the broadcast news media to explore the special problems of ensuring military security when and if there is real-time news media audiovisual coverage of a battlefield and, if special problems exist, how they can best be dealt with consistent with the basic principle set forth at the beginning of this section of the report.

Comments

1. The panel became convinced during its meetings with both media and military representatives that any current actual or perceived lack of mutual understanding and cooperation could be largely eliminated through the time-tested vehicle of having reasonable people sit down with reasonable people and discuss their problems. Although some of this has occurred from time to time through the years, there has not been enough, especially in recent years. The panel envisages that these meetings would be between ASD(PA) and/or his representatives and the senior leadership of both media umbrella organizations and individual major news organizations. A number of media representatives appearing before the panel said that they thought the media would be happy to participate in such a program. The program should include use of the Chiefs/Directors of Public Affairs of the Services, some of whom are already doing this.

2. Such meetings would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss problems or potential problems involving future military operations/exercises such as pooling, security and troop safety, accreditation, logistic support, and, most importantly, improving mutual respect, trust, understanding, and cooperation in general.

3. The panel does not exclude any news organizations in this recommendation, but practicality will lead to emphasis on meetings with major organizations. It would be equally useful for commanders in the field and their public affairs officers to conduct similar meetings with local and regional media in their areas, some of which are also underway at this time.

4. Both the panel and the media representatives lauded the efforts underway today to reinsert meaningful public affairs instruction in service schools and colleges. Many officers are sheltered from becoming involved with the news media until they are promoted to certain assignments where they suddenly come face-to-face with the media. If they have not been adequately informed in advance of the mutual

with each other, they sometimes tend to make inadequate decisions concerning media matters. In this connection, several media representatives told the panel they would be, and in some cases have already been, delighted to cooperate in this process by talking to classes and seminars.

5. Several media representatives also were enthusiastic about undertaking an effort to inform their employees about the military, primarily through visits of commanders and other appropriate personnel to their headquarters or elsewhere in their organizations. It was also apparent that some media are concerned with this problem to the point that they are taking an introspective look at their relations not only with the military but other institutions.

General Comments:

1. The panel agreed that public affairs planning for military operations involving allied forces should also consider making plans flexible enough to cover allied media participation, even in pools in some cases.

2. It was pointed out to the panel and should be noted that planners may also have to consider the desires of U.S. Ambassadors and their country teams when operations take place in friendly foreign countries. Some of these problems can, of course, be handled by the commanders and senior public affairs personnel on the scene, but they should be alerted to them in advance.

3. The media representatives all agreed that U.S. media should have first priority in covering U.S. military operations. The panel generally agreed that this must be handled on a case-by-case basis, especially when allied forces are involved.

Final Comment:

An adversarial -- perhaps politely critical would be a better term -- relationship between the media and the government, including the military, is healthy and helps guarantee that both institutions do a good job. However, this relationship must not become antagonistic -- an "us versus them" relationship. The appropriate media role in relation to the government has been summarized aptly as being neither that of a lap dog nor an attack dog but, rather, a watch dog. Mutual antagonism and distrust are not in the best interests of the media, the military, or the American people.

In the final analysis, no statement of principles, policies, or procedures, no matter how carefully crafted, can guarantee the desired results because they have to be carried out by people -- the people in the military and the people

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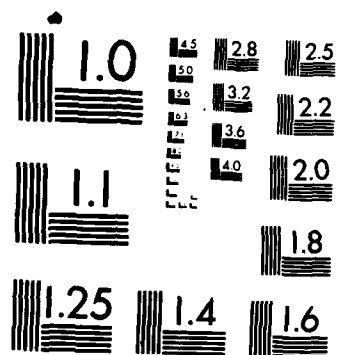
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in the media. So, it is the good will of the people involved, their spirit, their genuine efforts to do the job for the benefit of the United States, on which a civil and fruitful relationship hinges.

The panel believes that, if its recommendations are adopted, and the people involved are infused with the proper spirit, the twin imperatives of genuine mission security/troop safety on the one hand and a free flow of information to the American public on the other will be achieved.

In other words, the optimum solution to ensure proper media coverage of military operations will be to have the military -- represented by competent, professional public affairs personnel and commanders who understand media problems -- working with the media -- represented by competent, professional reporters and editors who understand military problems -- in a nonantagonistic atmosphere. The panel urges both institutions to adopt this philosophy and make it work.



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The dynamic relationship shared by the military and the media has ranged from cooperation and trust to hatred and contempt. This investigation encompasses a history of this relationship during military conflicts, beginning with World War I and continuing to the present. The objective was to investigate these changing relationships in order to determine a policy capable of reacting to the needs of the military, the media, and the American public.

This research documents the permanent split created in the relationship of the military and the media during the Vietnam War. Because of this negative relationship, the American military personnel distrusted the media and therefore, were reluctant to keep the media informed about their operations. The media, which is overwhelmingly dependent on the military to provide it with information, also distrusted the military. The result was that the American public did not always get an accurate picture of the war.

Without censorship in Vietnam the military was not always open and candid with the media. However, the military cannot allow the media to work under false assumptions, or report a story if they are only partially informed. Consequently, this research found that censorship during military conflicts will assist the flow of information between the military and the media. The effect will be a more fully informed American public during military operations.

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